



Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2012

Executive Office of Energy and
Environmental Affairs

Submitted to the National Park Service
Land & Water Conservation Fund



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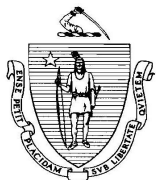
Acknowledgements

EEA would like to thank the members of the Advisory Committee for their invaluable input and insight on the recreational needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Also, thanks goes to the land trusts and municipal employees who took the time to complete the online survey that gave greater context to Massachusetts' available and needed recreational resources.

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TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

December 21, 2012

Residents of the Commonwealth
December 21, 2012
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Wealth – our municipal and state parks, our land trusts' properties, municipal conservation areas, and our farms and forests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deval Patrick", written over a large, loopy flourish.

Residents of the Commonwealth:

It is with great pleasure that I present to you Massachusetts' Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2012 (SCORP). The SCORP helps guide the distribution of federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to state agencies and municipalities for the acquisition of open space, renovation of parks, and development of new parks. I would like to thank the hundreds of residents we heard from through our public meetings, internet-based surveys, and phone survey, as well as the members of the SCORP Advisory Committee. This valuable input helped staff from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs develop goals for open space and recreation that will be in place for the next five years.

My administration has made an unprecedented commitment to open space and recreation over the past six years. We recently reached a milestone of 100,000 acres of land protected and over 150 municipal parks built or renovated. The results of the SCORP will help to inform the work that we continue to advance on open space and recreation projects, with a focus on trails and water-based recreation projects, investment in areas of the state with diverse populations, and outdoor recreation that is easy for people to reach in a short timeframe.

The Commonwealth recognizes the vital importance of open spaces to our residents' sense of well being. We look forward to implementing these goals through our state agencies, as well as our municipal and land trust partners. Please get outside and visit Massachusetts' Common

Chapter One—Introduction

Land and Water Conservation Fund Background

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was authorized by the federal Land and Water Act in 1965 with the intention of preserving, protecting, and assuring the availability of close-to-home outdoor recreation areas and conservation land for all current and future citizens of the United States. The Act accomplished this through a steady funding source – offshore oil and gas receipts. Congress distributes the funds to the states on an annual basis. Through Fiscal Year 2006, \$3.7 billion in LWCF grants have been awarded to over 40,000 projects, protecting over seven million acres of land across the country.¹

There are two parts of the LWCF program – the federal program and the stateside program. The federal program funds the acquisition of land and water conservation areas by federal agencies, such as the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The funds are directly appropriated to these agencies by Congress. The stateside program funding, on the other hand, is directly apportioned to each state based on a formula. States distribute the money through grants to communities or state agencies for the acquisition of land, the development of new parks, or the renovation of existing parks through a competitive grant program that requires a 50% contribution from the awardee. To remain eligible for these funds, each state must complete a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years.



Artesani Playground, Brighton, ©
Kindra Clineff/ DCR

The SCORP is a planning document that discusses the available recreational resources in a state, as well as its needs, and identifies the gaps between the two. It is used over the five year period of eligibility to distribute LWCF funding to projects that will narrow this gap through a competitive application process that is focused on fulfilling a state's recreational needs. The SCORP also is the method through which states fulfill multiple goals of the National Park Service (NPS) and remain eligible for funding. These goals include fulfilling the purposes of the LWCF Act, allowing appropriate time for a thorough public input process that helps to appropriately distribute the LWCF apportionment, and determining a way to advance the findings of the plan.²

Land and Water Conservation Fund	
Massachusetts Apportionment by Federal Fiscal Year	
2000	\$ 854,178
2001	\$ 2,017,182
2002	\$ 3,162,738
2003	\$ 2,142,275
2004	\$ 2,026,583
2005	\$ 1,990,728
2006	\$ 617,517
2007	\$ 617,517
2008	\$ 508,388
2009	\$ 598,743
2010	\$ 841,858
2011	\$ 812,191
2012	\$ 917,810

LWCF in Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the LWCF program is administered through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The Secretary of EEA is appointed by the Governor to act as the State Liaison Officer for the grant program and the Director of EEA's Division of Conservation Services is the Alternate State Liaison Officer. Liaison officers are authorized to

A Sample of Our 495 LWCF Projects

In 1978, a grant was awarded to the Department of Environmental Management to purchase 3,591 acres of land in the Berkshires that added to the Appalachian Trail. The trail runs from Georgia to Maine, covering approximately 2,000 miles.



Sea View Park, Photo by Town of Oak Bluffs

The Town of Oak Bluffs on the island of Martha's Vineyard was awarded a grant in 2009 to renovate the rest-room facilities at Sea View Park. Prior to the renovation, there was not a handicapped-accessible bathroom for users of the large public beach that abuts the ferry dock.

The City of Gloucester received a grant in 1978 to build St. Peter's Park on Gloucester Harbor. The park serves as a site for festivals and gatherings, as well as a space for visitors to learn more about Gloucester's rich history.

Mt. Watatic in Ashby was protected through a grant that was awarded to the Departments of Environmental Management and Fisheries and Wildlife. The acquisition protected a 281.5 acre parcel that serves as a critical migration route for raptors.

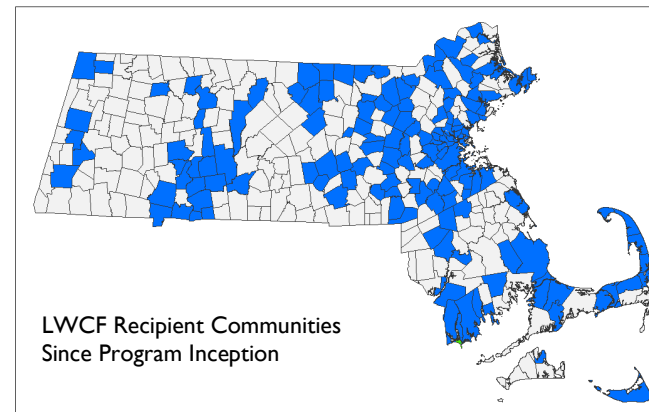


Mt. Watatic, © DCR

represent and act for the state when dealing with the Director of the NPS on LWCF matters. They also have the authority and responsibility to accept and administer funds from the NPS on approved LWCF projects.

Any Commonwealth municipality with an up-to-date Open Space and

Recreation Plan is eligible to apply for a LWCF grant, as well as the Departments of Fish and Game and Conservation and Recreation. Eligible projects include the acquisition of conservation or recreation land, the development of a new park, or the renovation of an existing park. When conservation land or parkland is a recipient of grant funding, it is protected in perpetuity under Article 97 of the Massachusetts State Constitution and Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act. This means that the land cannot be converted to non-conservation or recreation use without the approval of the



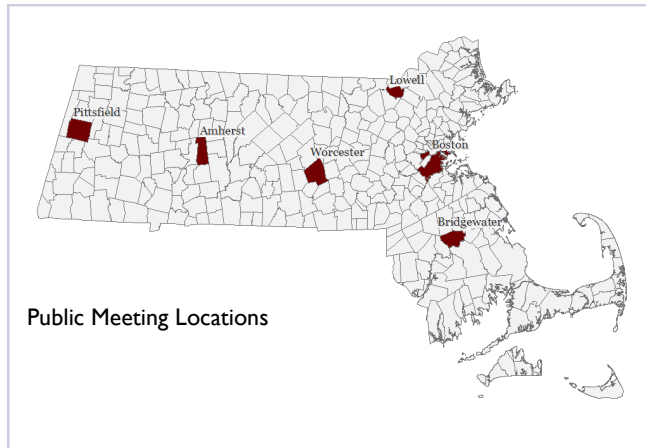
state legislature and NPS. In addition, EEA's "No Net Loss" policy and NPS require that compensation land be provided for the converted parcel. These acts and policies

guarantee that the LWCF projects will remain as a part of Massachusetts' outdoor recreation legacy for future generations.

Since its inception, LWCF has awarded over \$98 million to 495 projects in Massachusetts. LWCF's focus on making recreation easily accessible to population centers is a priority of the Obama-Biden Administration's America's Great Outdoors Report (AGO). The AGO noted that urban parks provide health, economic, and environmental benefits, but that many residents of urban communities lack access to them.³ A recommendation of the report was that more emphasis be placed on developing or renovating spaces that are closer to where people live, work, and play.

SCORP Planning Process

In Spring 2011, EEA Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. invited members of the conservation and recreation community to participate in the SCORP Advisory Committee. The mission of the Advisory Committee was to help inform the SCORP through the members' work



in conservation and recreation organizations, non-profits, and state, local, and federal government. The members were chosen to represent the breadth of different types of outdoor recreation, as well as the diversity of the types of communities throughout the state. Urban, rural, and suburban Massachusetts, as well as active and passive recreation interests, are represented on the committee.

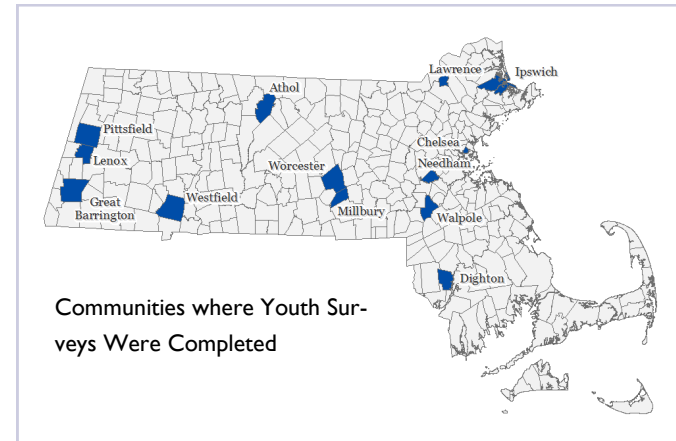
The group met in Spring 2011 as a kick-off to the SCORP planning process and in Fall 2012 to review a draft of the SCORP. EEA intends to meet with the Advisory Committee after the SCORP is approved by the National Park Service to help implement its recommendations. The members of the Committee have expressed the relevance of the SCORP to their work, as well as its potential to demonstrate to Massachusetts citizens and legislators how important outdoor recreation issues are to the public.

Citizen input on the SCORP was gathered in a variety of ways. EEA hosted a series of public meetings across the state in Fall 2011. Six meetings were held in each geographic region of the state. They were advertised

through press releases, signage advertising the meetings, and email distribution lists. Participants shared what types of conservation and recreation projects were important to them by describing what a “perfect day of outdoor recreation” would be. The responses to this question and notes from the meetings are in Appendix C.

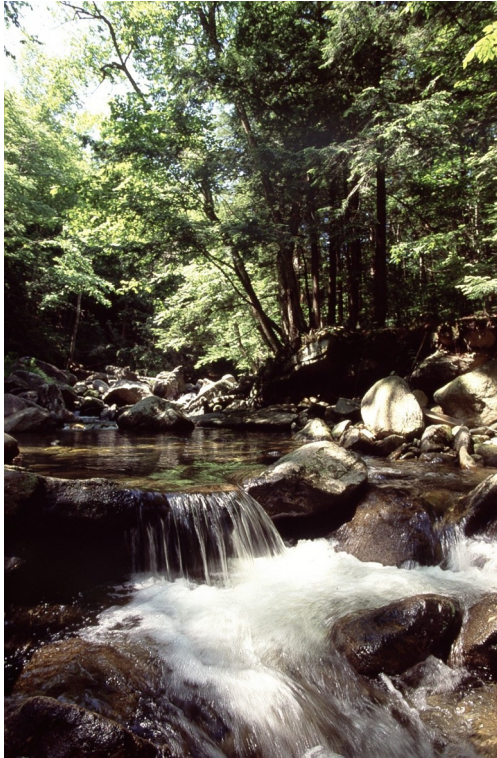
A web-based survey was used to gather input from residents and recreation providers – both municipalities and land trusts. The participation in this survey was robust with over 3,000 citizens responding, 82 municipalities, and 38 land trusts. Given the fact that Massachusetts has the highest number of land trusts per capita and they own thousands of acres of open space, their input was important to the success of the SCORP process.

In addition to these different methods for gathering public input, EEA wanted to ensure that statistically significant statewide data also informed the SCORP process. To that end, Abacus Associates of Northampton, Massachusetts was contracted to perform two surveys (with the assistance of a NPS SCORP Planning Grant). Abacus completed a phone survey that



gathered information on residents' feelings towards open space and recreation, oversampling in the urban areas of the state, as was recommended by “America’s Great Outdoors.” To better understand what recreation and open space issues are facing Massachusetts youth, 698 surveys were

completed by middle and high school students across the state. Abacus analyzed the responses and the results are in Appendix D.



Monroe State Forest © Kindra Clineff/DCR

Chapter Two—Massachusetts Overview

Geography



The Berkshires, Mt. Greylock, © Kindra Clineff/DCR

Massachusetts' geography is varied and diverse. From the Berkshires in the west to the coast of Cape Cod and the Islands in the east, Massachusetts has many natural gems. The availability of outdoor recreation resources, as well as the type of resource, varies across the state. The Berkshires has a large amount of protected open space, most of it used for passive activities, with a high concentration of state parks and forests and wildlife management areas.

The Connecticut River Valley, east of the Berkshires, is unique in that the southern part of the region is heavily urbanized, but becomes much less so as you head north. The Quabbin Reservoir, which serves as metropolitan Boston's drinking water supply, is in this region. Much of the land around the Quabbin is protected so that drinking water quality is ensured to remain high. The cities in the south, such as Springfield, Westfield, and Holyoke, have a higher percentage than the rest of the region of active recreational facilities where field-based sports occur.



Connecticut River Valley, Skinner State Park, © Jon Crispin/DCR

Central Massachusetts has a similar dichotomy.

Worcester, the second most populous city in New England, is in this region, but so are two other drinking water supplies – Wachusett and Sudbury reservoirs. The manufacturing centers of Leominster and Fitchburg are in this



Central Mass, Blackstone River and Canal State Park, © Kindra Clineff/DCR

region. While densely developed, both cities are fortunate to have large protected drinking water supply areas. Once again, a mix of state-owned protected open space and active recreation land are found. Residents of the region benefit from access to both types of recreational resources.

Boston and its expanding suburbs, from Essex and Middlesex Counties to the north and Norfolk, Bristol, and Plymouth Counties to the south, share a variety of open space and recreation resources owned by various government and non-profit entities. In the northeast, Essex County has a large amount of protected open space, including the Parker River Wildlife Refuge, which is owned by the federal government. Non-profit land trusts also hold land in the region. Moving south toward Boston, more active recreation sites have been developed. In the southeast, Bristol and Plymouth Counties have a variety of coastal offerings.



Boston Area, Revere Beach Reservation © DCR

Cape Cod and the Islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard are known by people all over the world for their abundance of coastal resources and amenities. Tourism, as well as second home construction and fishing, is critical to the area's economy. Therefore, land protection is extremely important to this region of the state. Federal, state, and local resources have been concentrated here to be sure that

Regional Cooperation

Cape Cod was developing rapidly in the 1980s and it became apparent that action was needed to be sure that its natural resources were not lost forever. The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts was formed in 1986 as a non-profit service center to six land trusts on the Lower Cape. Today, the Compact works with 23 land trusts and watershed associations across all of Cape Cod to acquire and manage open space. It also serves as an adviser to its members on legal and administrative matters. The Compact helps facilitate towns and non-profits taking a regional approach to land protection.

Since its inception, the Compact has been able to start a revolving fund that is now capitalized at \$600,000 that has provided \$3.75 million in low-interest loans that has in turn protected more than 405 acres of open space, identified the most important freshwater pondshore parcels for protection across the Cape, created the phrase “undevelopment” to restore blighted, developed parcels to their natural state, and secured more than \$10 million in state and federal open space grants.⁴



Cape Cod, Nickerson State Park,
© Kindra Clineff/DCR

conservation and recreation land is protected and available to future residents and visitors. The Cape Cod National Seashore is a prominent example of highly visited protected land.

Population Trends

Demographics

According to the 2010 Census, Massachusetts has 6,547,629 residents. This is an increase of 3.1% from the 2000 Census, while the country as a whole experienced a 9.7% increase in population. Massachusetts still remains the third

most densely populated state in the country. With 839.4 people living per square mile, only Rhode Island and New Jersey are more densely populated.⁵

The increase in Massachusetts' population is mostly from new immigrants moving into the state. In fact, without immigration during this time period, Massachusetts would have lost population. Between 2000 and 2007, more than 174,000 immigrants came to the state. Immigrants from Latin Americans made up 49% of the total universe of immigrants. Asia had the second highest percentage at 24%. China was the top country of origin.⁶ Almost two-thirds of the foreign-born population in Boston has emigrated since 1990. In total, 14.5% of Massachusetts' population is foreign-born.

Income and Education Attainment

Massachusetts' median household income is \$64,509 compared to \$51,914 nationally.⁷ Income levels vary widely across the state. Norfolk and Middlesex Counties, both within commuting distance of Boston, have two of the highest median household incomes in the state at \$81,027 and \$77,377 respectively. Hampden (\$47,724) and Berkshire (\$48,907) Counties have the lowest.⁸

Statewide, 88.7% of Massachusetts residents have a high school diploma and 38.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Both figures are higher than the national average (85.0% and 27.9% respectively). This percentage varies widely based on region. For example, almost half of Middlesex County's residents (49.3%) have a bachelor's degree while less than a quarter (23.8%) of residents in Hampden County do.⁹

County	Median Income 2006-2010
Hampden	\$47,724
Berkshire	\$48,907
Suffolk	\$50,597
Franklin	\$52,002
Bristol	\$54,955
Hampshire	\$59,505
Barnstable	\$60,317
Dukes	\$62,407
Worcester	\$64,152
Essex	\$64,153
Plymouth	\$73,131
Middlesex	\$77,377
Norfolk	\$81,027
Nantucket	\$83,347
Massachusetts	\$64,509

The wide range in incomes and educational attainment throughout the state are important to note as it likely impacts how much disposable income residents have to spend on open space and recreational activities. Public parks and open spaces may be more important to build and protect in areas that have lower income where people are not as able to afford recreating on private land.

Age

Over the past few decades, Massachusetts has seen an increase in the average age of its residents. In 1990, only 18.5% of the population was over the age of 45. The 2010 Census has that figure at 41.5%. At the same time, the percent of residents 18 and under has gone from 25.7% in 1990 to 21.7% in 2010. There has also been a similar decrease in population of residents between the ages of 18 and 44.

Age impacts what types of recreational facilities should be developed within a state. For example, if young families with children make up a smaller percentage of the state's population, there may not be a need for as many tot lots to be developed. On the other hand, as Massachusetts' average age increases, more passive activities should be developed, such as walking paths, that are likely to be desired by older residents. The public participation process for the SCORP showed a strong desire for better access to, and an increase in the number of, trails.

Disability

In 2010, 10.8% of all Massachusetts residents self-identified as having a disability, and of this group, most of them were ambulatory. While the rate

of residents with disabilities was pretty evenly split amongst genders, over 46% of person older than 75 identified themselves as having disabilities.¹⁰ As stated earlier, the average age of Massachusetts is increasing, making it more important than ever to consider recreational spaces that are suitable for those with disabilities. The phone survey results show that households that include a member with a disability prefer gardening and swimming more frequently than households that do not have a member with a disability. Picnic areas and historic sites were the top two facilities favored for development among this group.



Accessible hockey program © DCR

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Overall, 15.9% of Massachusetts residents identify as black, American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Hispanic or Latino. This compares to 27.6% for the rest of the country. The most diverse county is Suffolk County, which includes Boston, with 63.5% of the population identifying as white. The least diverse county is Franklin County, in western Massachusetts, where 94.9% identify as white.¹¹ The counties surrounding Boston, Middlesex and Norfolk Counties, are also more diverse than the Massachusetts average.

While Massachusetts is less diverse statistically than the rest of the country, many of the new residents of the state hail from other countries. Recreation planning must take into consideration the racial and ethnic makeup of residents as people with racial and ethnic backgrounds other than white may vary in their recreation preferences.

This includes where people spend time outdoors, i.e., more passive conservation land or more active recreation land, and what types of activities they engage in while there.¹² The phone survey was mindful of this fact and the more diverse areas of the state were oversampled to be certain that the residents' needs are fully considered.

Development Impacts

Although Massachusetts' population growth has not been as fast as many other states in the country, it is important to note the impact of development on our conservation and recreation areas. Most of the new homes being constructed are built a distance from existing cities, which causes a greater impact on open space.¹³ Between 1999 and 2005, Mass Audubon has found that 22 acres of land were lost to development each day, mostly due to residential development. This development caused over 30,000 acres of forestland and 10,000 acres of agricultural land to be converted from open space to development. During this time frame, state agencies and private conservation groups were able to protect 109,863 acres of land – two and a half times the rate of development.

The areas of Massachusetts that are developing more rapidly than others are referred to by Mass Audubon as the “sprawl frontier”.¹⁴ The communities in the sprawl frontier are those in the Interstate 495 belt and southeastern Massachusetts. Various organizations are working with these



Boston's July 4th Celebration, DCR Hatch Shell, © DCR

communities to assist with planning to balance protecting their open space and recreation resources while advancing economic development goals. EEA is directing some of the state land protection funding towards communities with the highest growth rate in order to help to maintain Massachusetts' open space heritage.

Economic Profile

Massachusetts has a diverse economic base. Traditionally, Massachusetts has been known for its health care and higher education sectors, as well as technology, financial services, and tourism. More recently, the life sciences, clean energy, and creative economy sectors have been emerging in their importance. The quality of our higher learning institutions, as well as the elementary and secondary schools, has helped to sustain a successful economy.¹⁵ The quality of life provided by our more than 1.2 million acres of conservation land and parks is a draw for companies and prospective workers.

Tourism

Tourism is the third largest employer in Massachusetts and is responsible for \$15.5 billion in direct expenditures every year.¹⁶ Over 20 million tourists visit the state every year. More than 14% stated that one of the top five reasons they visited Massachusetts was for its outdoor recreation resources. While the number of tourists decreased during the recent economic recession, the numbers are now returning to pre-recession levels. Outdoor recreation will help, in part, Massachusetts' economy recover. The protection of more open spaces and development of additional park facilities will continue to give tourists a reason to come visit Massachusetts. Agritourism is becoming a popular subset of tourism in the state with over 400 farms listed on the MassGrown online map. Tourists can participate in farm tours, culinary tours, day camps, hay or sleigh rides, overnight farm stays, or self-harvesting of produce.

Impact of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching on Massachusetts' Economy

In 2006, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service completed the National Survey on Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Viewing. It quantifies the economic impact of wildlife-based recreation.¹⁷ Here is a snapshot of the findings for Massachusetts:

Fishing

- ◆ 497,000 people (aged 16 and older) spent more than 7,847,000 days fishing in Massachusetts (99,000 of these were non-residents)
- ◆ Anglers spent \$397 million on trip related costs
- ◆ Total Economic Output – \$770,000,000
- ◆ Generated over \$29 million in sales tax revenue
- ◆ 8,169 jobs created with total earnings (wages and salaries) of \$225,328,262
- ◆ \$10,605,484 in State Income Taxes, \$38,887,196 in Federal Taxes

Hunting

- ◆ 66,018 hunters took to the field and spent 1,157,640 days hunting in Massachusetts, not including an additional 7,000 minors (under 16)
- ◆ Retail sales for hunting were \$67,507,420
- ◆ Total Economic Output – \$121,630,601
- ◆ Generated over \$3,511,692 in sales tax revenue
- ◆ 973 jobs created with total earnings (wages and salaries) of \$30,819,293
- ◆ \$1,486,091 in State Income Taxes, \$5,726,096 in Federal Taxes

Wildlife Watching

- ◆ 1.7 million people watch our wildlife
- ◆ Retail sales for wildlife-watching were \$469,300,000
- ◆ Total Economic Output – \$881,500,000
- ◆ Generated over \$15,300,000 in sales tax revenue
- ◆ 9,992 jobs created with total earnings (wages and salaries) of more than \$289,000,000

Home Values

The location of a home near conservation and recreation areas increases its value in Massachusetts. While the state has some of the highest home values in the country, 64% of residents own their homes and may be concerned about its value. Multiple studies have shown that the closer a home is to a park or open space, the higher the home's value is. This is referred to as the proximate principle. Through state efforts, such as the Regional Planning Efforts completed in the South Coast and 495/MetroWest regions over 65 communities have identified priority areas for growth and preservation, which is an important exercise in balancing the highest and best use of land. This effort will be further expanded throughout 2013. The state is also focused on supporting dense and well located housing production, which will further balance the importance of location efficient housing close to transit, jobs, open space and downtown centers.

Wayland has revitalized their downtown areas through a mixed-use approach that supports commercial, residential and open space. The Mixed-Use Overlay District Bylaw, passed in 2006, established the parameters of how property can be developed for residential, commercial and municipal space in the downtown core. This balanced approach allows for residents to have the ability to access housing and commercial in the downtown core, while having access to the Wayland City Park, located northwest of downtown. The Wayland City Park has two tennis courts, two basketball courts, two picnic shelters, a walking path, a one acre open space for field sports, and other outdoor amenities. The town's most recent efforts to improve sidewalks and connections to link the Wayland Center with a new Town Center Green will improve commerce, reduce traffic, encourage mixed



Nantasket Beach Seawall, Hull, © DCR

-use, while ultimately maximizing the economic growth in the community.

Attracting Businesses

The availability of quality open space and recreation resources in the state also helps to attract businesses. A successful information-based economy depends upon high caliber employees. When potential employees are considering what company to work for, environmental quality of the state is considered more frequently than housing, cost of living, or good schools. Furthermore, small-business decision makers rated park, recreation, and open space amenities as being the most important factor to use when measuring quality of life.²¹ This shows how important the investment of parks and open space is to the future economic well being of Massachusetts.

History of Outdoor Recreation in Massachusetts

Massachusetts has a proud and rich history of open space and recreation. Boston Common was the country's first public park. In 1634, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts purchased the land that now makes up the Common from a settler to use the land for livestock grazing. Almost 200 years later, in 1837, the Public Garden was built on land filled to the west of the Common.²² Massachusetts also boasts the country's oldest land trust, The Trustees of Reservations, which was established by an act of the legislature in 1891.²³ The founder of the Trustees was Charles Eliot, a landscape architect who was concerned about the rapid

development of the land in and around Boston. He proposed that land be set aside for the enjoyment of urban residents so they had a respite from the noise and crowded living of the city. Through his efforts, hundreds of land trusts are able to own and hold land for the benefit of all people.

Since the 1630s, Massachusetts has had the foresight to allow public access to land, such as tidelands and great ponds for fishing. However, the state government did not have the authority to own land and administer its use until the Metropolitan Parks District was established by the state legislature along with The Trustees of Reservations in 1892. Mt. Greylock State Reservation was established in 1898 by the legislature and was the first acquisition of land solely for forest preservation.²⁴ The creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a public work program opened up the state forests and parks to Massachusetts residents by building campgrounds and picnic areas. Until this point, most of the land was inaccessible. Since these early days of land conservation to the present, Massachusetts public and private organizations have protected over 1.25 million acres of land.



Maudslay State Park, Newburyport, ©
Kindra Clineff/DCR

In 1972, the Massachusetts legislature and electorate voted to add Article 97 to our state's Constitution. This amendment guarantees residents' right to a clean environment by providing that "the people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment." "Lands and easements taken or acquired for such purposes shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by laws enacted by a two thirds vote, taken by yeas and nays, of each branch of the general court." These public lands include both state-owned lands and municipal lands acquired for conservation or recreation purposes.

In addition to the legislative two thirds vote, municipal conservation or recreation commissions must approve the conversion, as well as the town meeting or city council. Once the votes have been taken, the municipality must find land of equal value and utility to dedicate to conservation or recreation in its place.

Article 97 is very much like Section 6(f)(3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. During the two most recent legislative session, 152 laws have passed to authorize conversion of Article 97 land. Although 779.7 acres have been lost, the laws helped to mitigate 1014.4 acres of land.

The legacy of land protection that we have in this state continues to this day. Governor Patrick and Lt. Governor Murray's administration has been an active supporter of land conservation. Since taking office in 2007, Massachusetts has protected over 100,000 acres of land and built or

BioMap2

When working to identify the most critically important wildlife habitat to protect, local and state agencies, as well as land trusts, have a valuable tool in BioMap2. Developed by DFG's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Massachusetts Program, BioMap2 combines rare species and natural community data with spatial data that identifies wildlife species and habitats from NHESP with TNC's analysis of large, well-connected, and intact ecosystems. The information also incorporates the ideas of ecosystem resilience to address future climate change impacts. Each community across the state received a map that identifies what is referred to as Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape so that all parties can target land acquisitions with a limited amount of land protection funding in an informed and targeted manner.

renovated over 150 urban parks. The administration's land conservation efforts have focused on three goals: building and improving parks in urban communities, preserving working farms and forests, and conserving high value habitat areas. This mirrors the priorities of America's Great Outdoors as well. United States Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar directed that the LWCF grants be targeted to urban parks and community green spaces projects, river recreation, and rural landscape conservation.

Current State of Outdoor Recreation in Massachusetts

Public Land

State

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is the largest owner of recreation and conservation land in the state. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), both within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) are the two state agencies that own and manage land. DFG's mission is to preserve the state's natural resources and people's right to conservation of those resources. DFG also has jurisdiction over the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife species, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them.²⁵ DCR works to protect, promote, and enhance the Commonwealth's natural, cultural, and recreational resources by improving outdoor recreational opportunities and natural resource conservation and restoring and improving facilities.²⁶ DFG manages over 195,000 acres of land and DCR manages over 450,000 acres.



Windrush Farm, Boxford, Photo by Trust for Public Land

Two other entities within EEA work to facilitate land protection. The Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) runs the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program. The program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the appraised value of their land and the agricultural value in exchange for a permanent conservation restriction that precludes any non-agricultural use of the property.²⁷ DAR holds 850 APRs on

over 68,000 acres of farmland. The APR Program was the first of its kind in the country.

The Division of Conservation Services (DCS) oversees the approval on non-state funded Conservation Restrictions (CR). CRs restrict future development by transferring some of the land owner's rights, such as building on the property, to a government agency or land trust for land conservation purposes. Massachusetts is the only state that requires state approval over CRs for signature by the secretary of the agency. Over 3,900 CRs have been signed since 1969 that permanently protect over 100,000 acres of land. DCS also administers multiple grant programs for municipalities and land trusts (both federally and state funded) for the protection of conservation and water supply land, as well as for the acquisition, development, and/or renovation of parkland. DAR and DCS's programs all award funding through a competitive process.

Municipal

The 351 municipalities across Massachusetts are the second largest open space land owner in the state, but own the most number of individual sites. Conservation Commissions were created by the legislature in 1957 to ensure resource conservation across the state. Commissions also hold land for conservation purposes. Today, municipal Conservation Commissions own over 120,000 acres of land. Most of this land is accessible to the general public for passive outdoor recreation. Park and recreation commissions, as well as some school departments, hold



Cronin Park, Lawrence, Photo by Groundwork Lawrence

land for the benefit of active outdoor recreation. Water departments are also major land holders, but generally have restrictions on access to their sites to protect the water supply.

Municipalities have multiple sources of funding available to them if they wish to protect conservation land or acquire, develop, or renovate parkland, including LWCF, as well as other grant programs run by DCS. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is another option. It is a tool for smart growth and was signed into law in September 2000. CPA is passed at a local level and helps to fund open space acquisitions, historic preservation, affordable housing projects, and outdoor recreational facilities. A local tax levy of up to three percent against real property is matched by a statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund, which is disbursed annually by the Department of Revenue. To date, 155 communities (44% of the state's 351 municipalities) have passed the CPA. CPA communities have protected more than 14,900 acres of open space and completed more than 725 outdoor recreation projects.²⁸

Federal

The federal government owns and manages multiple critically important conservation and recreation facilities, totaling about 50,000 acres. This includes the Cape Cod National Seashore, the Parker River, Great



Cape Cod National Seashore, Wellfleet, Photo by Chris Sanfino

Meadows, and Silvio O. Conte Wildlife Refuges, and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. While the amount of acres owned by the federal government may not be a large percentage of the land area in Massachusetts, the benefits provided by these resources are critical.

The National Park Service offers the most access to its sites, whether it is the National Seashore or historic sites in Lexington and Concord. The Army Corps of Engineers provides important recreational facilities at the Cape Cod Canal and several flood control impoundments. The federal government has also been a valuable partner in land conservation and management, including the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area.

Private Non-Profit and For Profit Land Owners

Massachusetts has an extremely active network of private non-profit land trusts. With over 130 land trusts, Massachusetts has the most land trusts per capita in the nation.²⁹ Land trusts own land across the state that are open for various outdoor pursuits. Most of the land protected by land trusts is for land conservation and habitat protection purposes, so the land may be restricted to passive recreation. The land trust community has a good working relationship with the state's environmental agencies. The two



Dillingham Property, Barnstable, Photo by the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts

often work together to complete larger landscape-sized projects.

Privately held recreation land includes golf courses, ski areas, and campgrounds, as well as marinas. While most of the private recreational facilities charge a fee for service, they help to fill a recreational niche that many times cannot be fulfilled by municipal or state government. They also serve as a value added commodity in that they provide additional space to perform a particular type of activity that is also provided by state facilities.

Prior SCORP Efforts

In 2006, EEA analyzed 160 municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans (OSRP) across the state to find common goals and needs. OSRPs that are reviewed and approved by EEA and updated each seven years are required for communities to qualify for state conservation and outdoor recreation grants. Currently 213 communities have an approved plan. Each plan requires diverse local input (usually an open space and recreation committee, public meetings, and a survey) to draft focused goals and an action plan. The 160 OSRP's analyzed included 112 open space committees, 223 public meetings and surveys to which 55,516 residents responded. Overall, community demand (usually listed as the top priority) via the plans was highest (66%) for paved trails for a combination of walking, running, jogging, biking or skating. This need was expressed in both city (60%) and town plans (68%). This finding further supports the other survey and public meeting input used over the past year for the 2012 SCORP.³⁰

For example, state campgrounds can be at capacity during many summer weekends, so privately run facilities add to the available supply of campsites. There are currently over 60,000 acres of privately held recreation land in the state.

Chapter Three—Current Supply

Current Supply

Massachusetts residents can choose from a diverse supply of recreational opportunities across the state. The current supply of recreational facilities includes 273 locations on coastal waters, great ponds, and rivers throughout Massachusetts run by the Office of Fishing and Boating Access within DFG. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife manages 171 recreational areas, which include Wildlife Management Areas, Wildlife Conservation Easement areas, Natural Heritage Areas, and River Access Areas.

DCR runs many types of recreation facilities. Statewide, they run 55 ball fields and courts, 60 playgrounds, and 3525 campsites. They have 27 salt water ocean beaches and 38 fresh water inland beaches, as well as 46 swimming pools, wading pools, and spray decks. Two downhill ski areas, two golf courses, and four rail trails are also available to the public. For winter recreation, there are 42 ice skating rinks for the public to enjoy, as well as many parks and forests.

The municipalities that responded to the web-based survey stated that they offered various outdoor recreational facilities. A sampling of active recreation facilities includes playgrounds, cross country facilities, basketball courts, soccer fields, golf courses, football fields, camping, and tennis courts. Municipal passive recreation facilities include those that have trails for hiking and water bodies for swimming and fishing. While land trusts do not offer built recreational facilities on their land, visitors can use the trail networks and supporting landscape to walk, jog, hike, bike, study nature, canoe and kayak, snowshoe

and cross country ski, and walk dogs, among other things.

Results from the Public Officials Survey

Massachusetts' municipal land conservation and recreation employees were asked to complete a web-based survey to describe what facilities were currently available to their residents. Responses from 82 municipalities and three service areas (Berkshire County, Central Massachusetts, and Quabbin Reservoir) were received. The 82 municipalities represent 23% of Massachusetts' 351 communities. Responding to a question

of the quality of their recreational facilities, most were listed in "good" or "excellent" condition, except for basketball courts and fresh water swimming areas. The respondents said that the two most popular resources and activities for families are playgrounds and water facilities (beach, pond, pool, etc.), for preschoolers are playgrounds and water facilities, for children are playgrounds and athletic fields, for adolescents are athletic fields and skate parks, for adults (by far) are hiking/walking trails, and for seniors are senior centers and hiking/walking trails. According to the survey respondents, none of these activities have decreased in popularity in the last five years. More importantly, survey results indicated that trails are the type of facility that has increased the most in popularity over the past five years, as well as the activity that respondents believe will increase the most in popularity over the next five years. A lack of funding for construction and maintenance were both listed the biggest obstacles to building new recreational facilities.



Young Adult Pheasant Hunt © DFG

Results from the Land Trust Survey

The land trust community was also asked to complete a web-based survey regarding the current and future use of their lands. Of the 130 land trusts in the state, 38 responses were received, which is a 29.2% response rate. Walking/jogging/hiking, dog walking, and nature study are the top three activities that take place their land. The bottom three activities indicated by respondents are snowmobiling, ATV use, and off-road vehicle use.

Results from the Phone Survey

The phone survey asked 400 residents what types of activities in which they are currently participating. From this question, we can draw a correlation between what types of facilities are available and what are needed to be able to perform that particular activity. It is important to note that if a particular activity is popular, there may not be adequate facilities of that type available. More facilities may need to be added to our outdoor recreation inventory to satisfy the demand. Eight out of 10 residents surveyed stated that they run, jog, or walk multiple times per week. Three other activities were mentioned by more than 20% of the respondents –, hiking, road biking, and gardening. Coming in at 20% is swimming in pools (swimming in fresh and saltwater are close behind at 18%). There is some regional variation in the answer to this question with hiking being more popular in central and western Massachusetts and among suburban and rural and white, non-Hispanic residents. Team sports are mentioned more often by residents of the state's Gateway cities,³¹ as well as younger males and minorities. Baseball and softball are the two exceptions – they are not mentioned as frequently as other sports. Existing state and local recreational facilities were rated as either excellent or very good in the phone survey.

The youth respondents were also asked about the types of recreation activities they enjoy. Their responses were similar to the adults – running, jogging, and walking are the most frequently mentioned activities at 83%. Close behind at 78% is swimming in pools, while 73% of respondents

swim in fresh and saltwater frequently. The youth respondents participate in team sports, such as basketball, football, soccer, baseball, more frequently than adults, which is not surprising given the number of organized youth athletic leagues in the state.



Robinson State Park, Feeding Hills, © Jon Crispin/DCR

Chapter Four—Demand for Outdoor Recreation

The phone survey, youth survey, web-based surveys, and public meetings throughout the state provided multiple forums for residents to voice their wishes for the types of outdoor recreation they would like to see developed and maintained across the state. With limited resources to devote to outdoor recreation, it is important to make funding decisions strategically. This chapter seeks to inform this process.

The chapter ends with small vignettes on the benefits of outdoor recreation and conservation can be found. They provide a greater context to the work that is completed through LWCF projects.

What Creates Demand

Before exploring what types of recreational facilities people are asking for, it is important to discuss what the motivation behind participating in outdoor recreation is for Massachusetts residents. The phone survey uncovered multiple reasons. Physical fitness received the most responses, with residents of large urban areas, those with lower incomes, and minority residents stating that most frequently. Those in the baby boom generation mention relaxation, the time that it gives them with friends and family, and mental well-being more frequently than other demographic groups. Respondents with children under the age of 18 like spending time with friends and family, but enjoy experiencing new things while recreating. Young residents more often than not want to recreate outside for the pure enjoyment of it.



Dennis Street Park, Boston, Photo by Aldo Ghirin

Results from the Public Officials Survey

The public officials survey asked what activities they felt would show an increase in popularity in their communities over the next five years. Trails and multi-use fields were the two types of facilities that officials said “require more resources” – 57.9% and 49.5% respectively. Other high ranking activities are, in decreasing rank order, playgrounds, baseball fields, community gardens, picnic areas, and fresh water swimming areas (from 37.9% down to 31.6%).

Public officials said that adolescents aged 13-18 is the age group that has the least of their needs met. When asked what types of facilities are most lacking in the community, teen centers and skateboard parks were mentioned the most frequently. In general, across the board, the type of facility that is most lacking at facilities is public restrooms. While teen centers are not an eligible LWCF project, it is important to note that teens’ needs should be kept in mind when making recreation funding decisions. These types of facilities could include skateboard parks and playing fields as well.

Results from the Land Trust Survey

While land trusts are not able to apply for LWCF grants, they are an active partner with state agencies and municipalities in land acquisition

projects. Currently, the top four issues land trust respondents identified when it comes to their facilities are acquiring new land, trail maintenance, conservation restriction stewardship, and funding. The most important physical issues the land trusts are addressing include invasive species management, control of undergrowth and weeds, and adequate parking.

Land trusts respondents pointed out social issues they are facing. These include illegal use of trails, littering and dumping, and conflicts between different types of users. Land trust survey respondents indicated that they struggle with making their work relevant to a more diverse audience and connecting their land to neighborhoods, schools, etc.



Shrine of Our Lady of LasSalette, Attleboro, Photo by Mass Audubon Society

Water-based recreation came up frequently at the public meetings. Respondents cited a need for more water access, whether for swimming or boating. The development of more boat ramps, including coastal access, was mentioned. Respondents also would like more land to be protected along waterways so that high water quality is maintained. There is a concern that as more development occurs across the state, available access to water will decrease.

While residents are looking for more water-based recreation options, it is important to note that the maintenance involved with spray parks, though less involved than swimming pools or water bodies, is still a concern with some

respondents. The entity responsible for maintaining the facilities, such as Departments of Public Works, should be consulted at the design stage of a water-related project to help address any concerns from the outset.

Results from the Public Meetings

The need for more trails, especially those closer to where people live, was most frequently mentioned as a real need across the state. There is a strong desire for more car-free recreation options, meaning options where a resident would not have to get in his or her car to access a recreational activity. Respondents want more town or city-wide trail systems, loop trails within long distance trail networks that can be completed in a shorter amount of time, and urban trails that connect to water bodies. Rail trails are popular, as is making roads more bike-friendly. The completion and increased access to long distance trails, such as the Mid-State Trail, the New England Scenic Trail, and the Central Mass Rail Trail, were mentioned frequently. Respondents wanted this land to be protected not just for trails, but also to provide a corridor for wildlife.

Although not a LWCF eligible project, it is important to note that many attendees said that they wanted more websites, apps, etc. to help find recreation areas. Specifically, people are looking to technology to find water access points, long distance trails, and campgrounds. It seems that recreation-based apps and websites have not caught up to users' technological savvy. Improved signage to find sites, as well as trails, was also frequently mentioned. In addition, there are a significant number of residents, especially in urban areas, that do not know how to swim. This can become a safety issue for both users and recreation providers. Swimming lessons should be provided to more people across the state. These non-LWCF eligible activities could be undertaken in partnership with the members of the Advisory Committee.

Results from the Phone Survey

It is heartening to hear that when asked if their participation in outdoor recreation would increase, decrease, or stay the same in the next five years, only 11% of respondents said that their participation would decline. The majority state that their participation rate will stay the same (49%). Thirty-eight percent project an increase. Interestingly, residents in large urban areas, as well as minority respondents, were more likely to say that their activity will increase (58%). Also, younger residents and those with children felt that their participation will increase. Youth respondents were asked what activities they would like to try or do more frequently in the next five years. Canoeing, kayaking, rafting or tubing and camping were chosen the most frequently at 43%.

The results should help guide where investments in specific types of amenities and activities are made across the state. They also can help to determine where additional outreach should occur and what types of facilitated activities may interest new users. For instance, guided canoeing trips in urban areas and camping trips organized through high schools are activities youth survey respondents are seeking. This would help create the next generation of outdoor recreation users.

Trends that Influence Demand

The influences that change in certain demographic categories, such as income, cultural/ethnic diversity, and age, have on recreation needs over time were discussed in Chapter 2. One demographic criterion that was not mentioned was location. Given that Eastern Massachusetts is more densely developed than Central and Western Massachusetts, regional differences in results were found. The phone survey also showed some clear differences in recreational preferences when it comes to income and race that enabled us to make Massachusetts-specific conclusions. This information follows.

Respondents were asked how often they used state or local facilities. Residents in the Eastern part of Massachusetts were more likely to use local

facilities than residents of Central and Western parts of the state. This may be due to the fact that there are more state facilities in those parts of the state so users do not have to travel as far to get to them.

While a regional difference in coastal use is expected since residents in Western Massachusetts would have less access to the ocean than eastern residents, the survey results also indicated an income and racial difference. Higher income households and white, non-Hispanic households use the coast more frequently. This result may be affected by the fact that residents in Eastern Massachusetts have a higher per capita income than the rest of the state, along with the best access to the coast.

When asked what facilities respondents would like to see more of, Western and Central Massachusetts residents more often mention hiking trails than other regions. People in Southern Massachusetts request more overnight camping areas. The need for additional beaches is mentioned twice as often with women than men.

The top three values residents see beyond recreation in their outdoor areas are protecting wildlife habitat, improving quality of life, and protecting drinking water supplies. The responses vary with demographic factors. Improving the quality of life was particularly important to households with children, residents with a higher educational attainment, middle and higher income residents, and women. Men were more likely to mention wildlife habitat protection than women.

Residents of Western and Central Massachusetts have to travel further to their recreation destination. However, minorities and non-minorities have equal access to their most used locations. Residents of large urban areas are more likely to walk or jog to recreation than residents in small urban cities, suburbs, or rural areas. Perhaps surprisingly, 17% of residents of large urban areas take public transportation to their recreation



Hunter Education, © DFG

destination. Residents of Western and Central Massachusetts are most likely to drive to recreation, perhaps due to the travel time involved to access facilities or the lack of available public transportation.

Barriers to Increased Demand

Now that we recognize what types of activities are popular across the state, what prevents people from enjoying available outdoor resources? Half of all adult respondents cite a lack of time as their top constraint. Lack of time was also mentioned at the public meetings as the reason why people did not go outside and recreate more frequently. Other commitments getting in the way is mentioned by 25% of the respondents.

Youth respondents' top response was also being too busy. They also mentioned weather and their preference to be on the Internet over going outside. Thankfully, safety does not seem to be an important factor in keeping people indoors. If more recreation areas were available closer to home, the youth respondents said they would be more apt to recreate outdoors. Also mentioned was access to more sports equipment and areas designed for people their age.

Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation

Public Health

Recognizing that more than half of adults and over one quarter of high school and middle

school students are overweight or obese, Massachusetts' Department of Public Health started the Mass in Motion Program in 2009. It is a statewide obesity prevention initiative that stresses the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. The program focuses on promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools through grants to cities and towns that make wellness a priority, through the Massachusetts Children at Play Initiative.³² Grants can be used to make playgrounds and other areas safe for play for children across the Commonwealth. Mass in Motion has led to the construction of a community garden in Franklin, improvement in the safety and condition of city parks by community leaders in Fitchburg, and the implementation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan in Gloucester.

There have been over 150 parks renovated or built in Massachusetts under the Patrick-Murray administration. Increasing access to usable parks has a positive impact on residents' health as parks get people moving. If the usage rates found through the phone survey are extrapolated to the 2.5 million households and 6.5 million residents in the Commonwealth, it is estimated that between 800,000 and two million residents use their local recreation facilities at least once a week.

Farmers' Markets and Urban Agriculture

Farmers' Markets can now be found all over Massachusetts where local growers sell their own fruits and vegetables to local residents. Many Farmers' Markets also have other locally made farm products, such as baked goods, jams, maple products, honey, cheese, flowers, eggs, and more. More than 250 farmers' markets are found across the state including those at 18 service plazas run by the Department of Transportation that have their own markets.³³ This is double the number from only five years ago. Farmers' Markets help to keep farmland as farms as farmers' profits are increased by selling directly to



Bradley Palmer State Park © Kindra Clineff/DCR

customers. Massachusetts farms rank ninth nationally in total value of direct sales to consumers and second nationally in value of the average direct market sales at \$25,356 per farm.³⁴

Many communities across the state have also started community gardens over the past few years as residents have recognized the importance of a healthy diet and eating locally. Eating locally helps to reduce the impacts of climate change by eliminating the distance food must travel to a diner's plate. Densely developed and low income communities have started community gardens in an effort to improve both the health of the environment and their residents. Urban farming also has the benefit of creating jobs.

Nuestras Raices in Holyoke began in 1992 when immigrants from Puerto Rico came together to transform an abandoned lot filled with dirty needles and criminal activity into the city's first community garden. The organization now has 10 community gardens throughout the city with 100 member families and environmental program that works on issues facing its residents, a youth program, and a 30 acre inner city farm.³⁵ Groundwork Lawrence started in 2001 and has been working to improve the city's environmental condition to sustain a healthy and sustainable city. Community food programs are one of the ways that the mission is accomplished. This includes Farmers' Markets, Community Gardens, and Schoolyard Gardens programs that are designed to help improve residents' health, as well as empowering them through education.³⁶ The City of Boston has also been actively pursuing the acquisition of small parcels of land to allow for urban farming.

Locally Grown Forest Products

Farming and forestry contribute more than \$1 billion each year to our economy, principally in rural areas in hundreds of small businesses. For example, a survey of 40 farms conserved in Massachusetts in 2011 found that these 3,000 acres supported 68 full time jobs and 162 seasonal or part time jobs. A study in New Hampshire found that each 1,000 acres of working forests provide 3.6 jobs.³⁷ Collectively, farming and forestry keep hundreds of thousands of acres in active farming and forestry use that contribute to our quality of life.

In 2012 EEA and DCR surveyed 1,100 private forest landowners who received state funding for a Forest Stewardship Plan for their land (the response rate was 37% - 419 families who own over 30,000 acres of forestland). These landowners have invested an average of \$2,268 to improve their land since the plan. By far, the main purpose in developing the plan was to improve wildlife habitat and reduce property taxes and 35%

of the owners spend more time on their land since getting the plan.

Since completing their plan, 52% of owners often walk or hike on their land; 36% often cut firewood on their land; 20% often go birding on their land and 16% often remove invasive species on their land. About one-quarter of the owners have increased their involvement in other conservation-related activities in their community since doing the plan. A remarkable 40% are considering permanently conserving their land via a land trust, town or state agency since completing the plan and an additional 28% are thinking about permanent conservation.



Cross and Cedar Community Garden, Lawrence,
Photo by Groundwork Lawrence

Protection of Water Supplies

The SCORP statewide phone survey found that drinking water was among the most important non-outdoor recreation value of the land respondents visit (just behind wildlife and quality of life, but far above all other values). Forests are the best source of treatment for public water supplies. The dense canopies and complex soils filter rainfall and non-point source pollution from developed areas. A study of 27 water suppliers by The Trust for Public Land found that for every 10 percent increase in forest cover around the source area, treatment and chemical costs decreased by approximately 20% - up to a 60% reduction for a reservoir with 60% forest cover on its contributing watershed.³⁸ Forest conservation was one of the key actions that was used by the metropolitan Boston and New York City water suppliers to avoid the construction of filtration plants that would cost hundreds of millions (Boston) to billions (New York City) of dollars to rate payers.

Reduction in Stormwater Treatment

Trees in parks and other urban public lands significantly reduce the amount of stormwater that flows into city sewer systems. Combined sewer overflows are one of the most serious and significant infrastructure challenges facing many cities in Massachusetts. For example a recent study of public lands within the city of Corvallis, Oregon found that the 440,000 public trees reduced stormwater flowing into its sewer system by more than 100 million gallons per year.³⁹



Quabbin Reservoir, Belchertown, © DCR

Chapter Five—Goals and Objectives

The following goals and action steps were developed after distilling all of the information that was gathered through the public participation process. Without this valuable input, there would be no way to know what types of recreation our residents appreciate and what they would like to see more of. It is also important to frame the goals in the context of what is preventing people from being more active. This information should enable us to target our resources to facilities that will meet demand and overcome barriers to recreation.

The four goals of the 2012 Massachusetts SCORP are as follows:

1. Increase the availability of all types of trails for recreation

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- paved and unpaved trails that provide access and ability to participate in multiple different activities: running, jogging, and walking; hiking; biking; backpacking; and camping
- increasing access to existing trails by making it easier for more residents to use them by creating shorter, intracommunity loops and protecting land to lengthen existing trails
- trails that provide corridors to wildlife and enable easier access to users for wildlife viewing

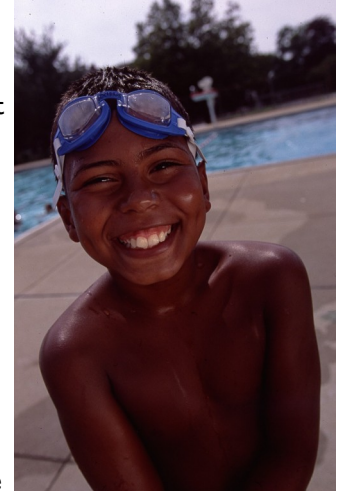


Borderland State Park, © Kindra Clineff/DCR

2. Increase the availability of water-based recreation

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- increasing access to the water by acquiring more waterfront property and developing put-ins for canoes, kayaks, and other boats
- waterfront areas (rivers, ponds, lakes, and ocean) that are safe for recreational swimming and fishing
- pools and spray parks that provide water access to communities that are limited by their available water resources or geographic location



DCR Pool User © Kindra Clineff/DCR

3. Invest in recreation and conservation areas that are close to home for short visits

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- neighborhood parks and conservation areas that are within a short walk or bike ride to a large portion of a community's population
- acquisition of small parcels of land that can be utilized for community agriculture
- facilities that can be enjoyed in an hour's visit, such as a tot lot or community garden
- parks and conservation areas that can be enjoyed with the mode of transportation that was used to access the site, such as skateboard parks, walking loops, or trails accessible to bicycles

4. Invest in racially, economically, and age diverse neighborhoods given their projected increase in participation in outdoor recreation

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- acquiring land in areas that are diverse from the standpoint of economics, age, and race
- developing parks and playgrounds in diverse neighborhoods
- renovating park facilities to reflect the needs of that community's demographics

These goals will meet the needs of Massachusetts residents, but also the goals of America's Great Outdoors (AGO). Residents stated the need for recreation close to home, to places that are reachable without getting in a car, and in diverse neighborhoods. This will meet the AGO report's goal of investments in urban parks and community green spaces. Massachusetts' surveys showed a desire for more access to water. The AGO goal of restoring and increased public access to water, including water trails, will be met. Protecting additional land for trails will satisfy the AGO goal of conserving natural landscapes that are suitable for appropriate public use and enjoyment.

Multiple SCORP goals coalesce with the Commonwealth's desire to increase the share of cyclists and pedestrians among Massachusetts transportation choices. Recently, MassDOT announced the goal of tripling the amount of travel occurring by bicycle, walking and transit. The goal is consistent with Governor Patrick's aspirations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the state by 25% by 2020. The mode shift goal also recognizes the health benefits and cost savings associated with getting people out of personal vehicles and onto more cost effective and sustainable travel modes.

By advancing statewide recreation goals that fit nicely with national goals, Massachusetts is in a position to smartly use our LWCF apportionments over the next five years. Much time and attention have been taken to ensure that the recommendations put forward in this document will help to increase the use of outdoor recreation facilities by the most number of Massachusetts residents. Not only were types of recreation chosen based on what we have heard to be the most popular, but also by what has prevented people from participating in recreation. Matching the two together will help meet the needs and desires for outdoor recreation of residents across the Commonwealth.

Town of Amherst's Trail System

Taking into consideration the goals of SCORP, an "ideal" project would develop a walking trail near water resources that is within walking distance to a diverse, underserved neighborhood. The Town of Amherst's trail system in western Massachusetts well represents this type of project. Amherst is a college town with both the state's flagship university, as well as Amherst and Hampshire Colleges. It is an Environmental Justice community – there are populations of low income, minority, and non-English speaking residents.

The town's Conservation Department has established a trail network of 80 miles that traverses Amherst and crosses into the neighboring towns of Shutesbury and Leverett. The town helps to maintain three levels of trails – major regional trails, local literary trails, and local trails. The Norwottuck Rail Trail, owned by DCR, is a regional trail used by cyclists, pedestrians, families, commuters, and tourists for biking, rollerblading, walking, and cross-country skiing that connects the town to the City of Northampton and the Town of Hadley. The Literary Trails is a system that recognizes the importance of the landscape to Amherst's literary history, which includes famous residents such as Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost. The Local Trails connect the Major Regional Trails to conservation areas and village centers.⁴⁰ These are the types of trails that residents throughout the public participation process were looking for in their communities.



Norwottuck Rail Trail, © DCR

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Appendix A—Wetlands Component

According to the LWCF Manual, SCORPs must include a wetlands priority component that is consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The wetlands priority component must show that the authors of the SCORP consulted with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources, include a list of wetland types given priority status when acquiring land, and discuss outdoor recreation opportunities that utilize wetland resources.

Massachusetts is active in protecting, preserving, and restoring our wetlands. Wetlands work to reduce pollution and flooding while supporting ecosystems and providing cleaner water. Mass Audubon has estimated that freshwater and saltwater wetlands in Massachusetts provide \$2.3 billion in annual ecosystem service value, while the Army Corps of Engineers has estimated that wetlands in the Charles River watershed prevent \$18 million in flood damage every year.⁴²

The filling of wetlands was once a significant issue facing Massachusetts. Thankfully, wetlands loss has slowed over the past decade. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the state's Conservation Commissions review thousands of applications annually from parties that wish to work in or near wetlands. This work has helped to protect wetlands from alteration. Even with a slower economy, over 5000 filings were reviewed in 2010.⁴³

The permit review has helped to slow the loss of wetlands. From 2001 through 2005, on average, Massachusetts lost 157 acres of wetlands each year. From 2005 through 2009, the average number of lost acres dropped to 37 – a 77% improvement. Possibly more importantly, however, was that the loss of wetlands that were planned and received permits has increased and illegally activity has dropped. In many cases, those that were filled illegally were the subject of mitigation. From Fiscal Year 2006 through 2011, MassDEP actions restored 95.7 acres of wetland and 17,635 linear

feet of bank.⁴⁴

Massachusetts' Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) within DFG works to restore aquatic habitat. DER's mission is to restore and protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands, and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. DER staff have extensive experience and qualifications in all aspects of river and wetland restoration planning and project management. In addition, DER frequently collaborates with other state agencies that support restoration efforts, including the Division of Marine Fisheries, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Office of Coastal Zone Management, Department of Environmental Protection, and the state's two National Estuary Programs.

Massachusetts is able to have such a successful restoration program due to strong technical, outreach, and funding partnerships with municipalities, landowners, non-profits, private companies, academic institutions, and government agencies. On average, state investment in restoration leverages three to five times its initial value from non-state sources and delivers important social and environmental benefits to Massachusetts' communities. Restoration funding also supports local and regional economies by generating an average employment demand of 12.5 jobs and \$1,750,000 in total economic output from each \$1 million spent on these projects.

DER has helped partners restore over 1,200 acres of degraded and destroyed wetlands across Massachusetts. As of September 2012, 80 wetland restoration projects have been completed, 1,207 acres of wetlands of been restored, and 40 wetlands restoration projects are in development. Many of these sites are now available for recreation by users across the Commonwealth.

DCR and DFG, the two state agencies that acquire land for conservation and recreation use, take wetlands into consideration when determin-

ing which land to acquire. When considering land for acquisition, DCR identifies any wetlands on the site as a resource attribute in its analysis given that they often provide habitat for rare species. Wetlands also are a part of BioMap 2's Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape designations, both of which are priority protection areas for DCR. A relatively intact wetland system in a more urbanized environment is critical to maintaining certain natural communities, so is also often looked at favorably by DCR land acquisition staff.

DFG has its own formula for deciding what land to acquire. Palustrine and estuarine natural communities are given priority status, as are those wetlands that provide habitat for rare species that are dependent upon them. Any land that falls within BioMap 2's Wetland and Aquatic Core Habitats and Wetland and Aquatic Buffers are considered to be important land to acquire, as is land with certified and potential vernal pools on it. Wetlands are considered when choosing sites for fishing access or boat launches.

Appendix B—SCORP Implementation Program

Throughout the development of the 2012 Massachusetts SCORP, EEA focused on how the plan would be implemented going forward. It was important to the Commonwealth to make sure that the goals and objectives could be reached within the five year timeframe, supported by the anticipated LWCF and state funding levels for recreation and conservation projects. It was also imperative to the SCORP Advisory Committee that the document be user-friendly. A SCORP reader should be able to easily determine how their community, organization, or user group can utilize the information provided. EEA has heard from users of the SCORP that the 2012 version has been easy to use when writing Open Space and Recreation Plans, as well as applying for EEA grant programs.

The goals are directly related to the outdoor recreation issues of statewide importance that were identified in the SCORP. The robust public process that was undertaken for the SCORP informed the goals and objectives. EEA heard many of the same issues discussed at the public meetings across the state, as well as the other surveys that were completed. Residents of the Commonwealth are extremely interested in recreational activities that are close to home, involve trails, and include water. All four SCORP goals are priorities as they were the issues most often cited by survey respondents. Successfully advancing these four goals with available resources was attainable.

Massachusetts plans to implement the goals and objectives of the 2012 SCORP in multiple ways. Most importantly, LWCF grant rounds will be offered as often as federal funding allocations to support projects focused on the four SCORP objectives. The rating system for the grant program will award points to applications proportional to the number of objectives it satisfies.

EEA offers two state-funded grant programs for municipalities that are similar to the LWCF grant program. The LAND grant reimburses municipalities for conservation land acquisitions. The PARC grant reimburses municipalities for parkland acquisitions and park development and renova-

tion. The grant rating systems for both programs award points for how well the application will implement the findings of the SCORP. Conservation Partnership is a grant program specifically for non-profit organizations to help them acquire land of conservation or recreation interest. The SCORP goals and objectives are a part of the rating system for this program as well.

Communities applying to the grant programs must have an up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan to be eligible for funding. OSRPs require that the community review the SCORP and discuss how it pertains to their goals and objectives. The SCORP provides communities with information on the types of recreational activities the residents of the Commonwealth identify as most important to them.

Representatives from the Massachusetts Departments of Fish and Game, Conservation and Recreation, and Agricultural Resources were members of the SCORP Advisory Committee. The representatives were actively involved in developing the goals and objectives and reporting back to their respective Commissioners the findings of the public process. In addition, the Secretary of EEA discussed the SCORP process with the Commissioners and directed that the goals and objectives of the SCORP be incorporated into actions undertaken by their agencies. The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program was represented on the committee as well and reviewed the final SCORP. The program supported SCORP goals and objectives and indicated they would be applied through its work as well.

The Advisory Committee agreed to meet on an annual basis to evaluate how the goals and objectives of the SCORP are being implemented. These meetings are important so that the Commonwealth can hear from partner non-profit organizations and municipalities what projects they are undertaking to execute the SCORP's goals and objectives. Given the strong support the SCORP received from the members of the committee and how well the goals and objectives fit with their organizations' missions, it is expected that the SCORP will be implemented not only by the state, but also

these partners.

These annual meetings will allow Massachusetts to reflect on how successfully the goals and objectives are being achieved. EEA can look at the work accomplished through the grant programs to see if the rating systems need to be adjusted so that more SCORP-relevant projects are selected. Reviewing information about projects completed by EEA agencies will allow us to adjust work plans as needed. Finally, EEA will have the opportunity to touch base with outside partners to hear from them what has been accomplished to further the SCORP's goals and see if they require additional state assistance to do more.

The outdoors has always been important to Massachusetts' residents as seen through the long history of accomplishments in the conservation arena. This places the state in an enviable position in the implementation of the SCORP since we have many partners to help accomplish the goals. The residents of our state will also likely be making sure that we are completing the goals due to their buy in through the public process.

Appendix C—Advisory Committee Invitation Letter and Distribution List



Deval Patrick
GOVERNOR
Timothy Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.
SECRETARY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181

We hope that you will be able to join the SCORP Advisory Committee and help ensure future efforts to improve recreational facilities and protect land throughout the state. Please RSVP to Melissa Cryan, LWCF Stateside Coordinator, at melissa.cryan@state.ma.us or (617) 626-1171 by April 30, 2011.

Sincerely,

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.

Secretary

April 19, 2011

Dear :

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is required to update the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years to maintain its eligibility for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF funds the acquisition of land, development of parks, and renovation of existing parks. Massachusetts' SCORP expires in January 2012 and we have begun the work to update the plan to maintain our eligibility for this important funding source. In Fiscal Year 2010, the Commonwealth received \$840,000. President Obama has committed to fully funding the LWCF by 2014. Full funding would bring about \$15 million annually to Massachusetts.

The purpose of the SCORP is to identify outdoor recreation issues of statewide importance, evaluate public preferences for outdoor recreation, and evaluate the availability of outdoor recreation resources and facilities in the Commonwealth. In order to develop a high quality SCORP, we rely on the valuable input and participation of our partner organizations throughout the state. We also hope that through a collaborative effort, your organization will find the SCORP to be a useful planning and informational resource in the future. I would like to ask for your organization's participation in the SCORP Advisory Committee. The work of this committee will not require a major time commitment. Three meetings are anticipated: a kickoff meeting on May 24, 2011 at 10:00 am at the Doyle Center in Leominster, a meeting for feedback in the fall, and an implementation meeting in the winter. If you are not able to serve on this committee yourself, we would appreciate it if you could appoint a member of your staff to represent your organization.

Invitation List

Edward Lambert, Jr., Commissioner, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation

Mary Griffin, Commissioner, MA Department of Fish and Game

Scott Soares, Commissioner, MA Department of Agricultural Resources

Richard Hubbard, Chair, Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

John Whalen, Executive Director, Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association

Wendy Sweetser, Director, Highland Communities Initiative

Andy Kendall, President, The Trustees of Reservations

Andrew Falendar, President, Appalachian Mountain Club

Laura Johnson, President, Massachusetts Audubon Society

Charlie Tracy, New England Trail Administrator, National Park Service

Gus Schumacher, Executive Vice President, Wholesome Wave

Thomas Curren, Director, PEW Charitable Trusts

Jay Ash, City Manager, City of Chelsea

James Ruberto, Mayor, City of Pittsfield

Rose Gonzalez, Deputy Director, Groundwork Lawrence

John Auerbach, Commissioner, MA Department of Public Health

Appendix D—Public Meetings Notes

Worcester SCORP Meeting November 8, 2011

Use national surveys like USFWS 2011 (statistically significant in each state)

National environmental education sources

Use DCR information or Mass Audubon or TTOR visitor information

Activities that participants like to do: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter hiking

Parking is limited especially in winter

Winter plowing should be limited on bike trails where cross-country skiing could be done

How can cross-country skiing, walking, and dog walking co-exist?

Parks and conservation areas need parking

Parking is sometimes closed

Bike trail parking lots shouldn't be used by commuters

Parking should accommodate use (for example, boat, snowmobile, and horse trailers)

Town residents don't know the local parks, conservation areas in town

Funding on improving people's awareness to local resources

How to get people to use existing areas

Local and state parks need more maps, guides

Homemade trails make it easy to get lost

Logging obliterates trails

Wear blaze colors during hunting season – how do you get people to do this?

Trail markings are inconsistent easy to get lost

Need more information on where you can go

Use Arbor Day/Earth Day to increase awareness

Use schools to advertise parks

Use non-environmental events “safety day”, home shows, town days, parades, historical societies, faith groups, family-oriented events, moms groups, newcomers clubs, sporting good stores, REI, EMS, use websites – maps

Outdoor recreation “app”

Create statewide outdoor activity organization (all activities) like NH, VT

Really coordinate with Mass Tourism

Coordinate with businesses – outdoor recreation is a draw for employees to come to MA

Coordinate with Chambers of Commerce

Coordinate with arts organizations like Elm Park and Concord River Greenway

Need to get more diversity in outdoor recreation

Work with Department of Social Services

Grants for increasing park use

Work with adoption groups and organizations that work with families

Work with faith-based groups

Make roads more bike-friendly

Need more bike paths, should be horse friendly

Make road grates bike-friendly

Need horse riding B&B's

Cape Cod – need parking for outdoor recreation
More park use = safer parks
Need contact number for local police on signs for reporting illicit activity

Lowell SCORP Meeting November 15, 2011

How will New England Governor's "Connecting People to Outdoors" be used in SCORP?
Camping season too short staff reduced; open camping areas for Patriots Day (Nickerson State Park)
EEA and agencies have broad mission – bridges, roads, dams – but should focus on environmental work and increase staffing
Internet camping reservation system is difficult for non-computer users
Need MA campgrounds that have good family activities
Need more walk-in camp sites like Tully Lake (not car camping, not backpacking, but in between)
Need more photos, etc. about what a campground experience will be like
Have "learn to" activities for camping, kayaking, etc. so that people can see if they enjoy the activity before they invest money in them
Develop a campground "finder" website
Need more state water access, including the coast, with parking
Maintain existing boat ramps
MA Office of Travel and Tourism does not mention camping
Good policy to have no alcohol at campgrounds and quiet

hours after 10:00 pm
Safety can be a barrier to going to parks
Not enough time is also a barrier – need parks to be close by
Find a park "app" would be helpful
Maintain existing parks near home – repair and maintenance important
It's tough to add new parks when can't take care of existing parks
Recreating in MA is good for economy – closed campgrounds loses money to economy
Car-free outdoor recreation is needed
Town-wide trail systems would be great
Complete long distance trails with shorter loops
Spend more resources on local loops for biking and walking
Work with Land Trusts to use local existing areas with programs
Finish rail trails and more connectors
Need more urban trails that connect to rivers
Utilities are obstacles to trails need utility (real estate, public services, advocates) committee to help move this forward
Copy British utilities to increase recreation
Utility "SWAT" team
Use Commonwealth Connections as guide
Focus on Mid-State Trail
Focus on M&M (New England Scenic Trail) (protection/routing)
Finish Central Mass Rail Trail
Need to expand use of cross-country skiing usage
Including long distance trails Concord River, Merrimack River Trail
Signs needed to guide better
Need to reduce runoff to rivers improve sewerage treat-

ment plants
Worried about clear cuts and fueling biomass electric plants
MA regions should market to keep people recreating in MA
Major Berkshires marketing

Pittsfield SCORP Meeting November 16, 2011

Canoeing and hiking
River protection
Public education re: what's available for recreation in that park
Use technology for things like the park passport, quest
No pavement/people/pollution – access to these types of land and the design and construction
Trail interconnectivity (Appalachian Trail and state land)
Cross-country skiing, mountain biking
Reinvest in trails, paved trails, and signage
Take advantage of volunteers – don't make it so difficult for people to volunteer
Trails are in poor condition – more maps and signs are needed
Being outdoors with wildlife
Off-road motorcycle trails in bad shape – bridges
Usage patterns
OHV impacts to trails
OHV overuse
Trail connections – state/federal/community, landscape-scale
Fish habitat/watershed connectivity/climate change
Limited cleanup of the Housatonic is not enough – must be fishable and accessible

Winter parking – access to parks regardless of season
Keep some bike trails unplowed for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
Inadequate trail maintenance
Legality/sustainability of trail use
2,000 miles of snowmobile trails
Recreational easements – need state leadership to obtain them
Need more opportunities for elderly, kids, and accessible areas
Urban trailheads – walk from home
Get more SCA participants to maintain trails
More safe bike lanes
Viewsheds in forests
Destination
Address vandalism
Create welcoming setting
Countywide bike trail
Use existing roads for bike trails
Engage kids/schools
Need outfitters where the recreation is
Adventures close to home
Support school programs
Increased organized sports – need more facilities to make this happen
Protect trails from logging

Amherst SCORP Meeting November 17, 2011

Protecting working farms and forest – protects water, wild-

life, wild forests, tourism with hiking and walking, visual access
Speed up APR process – agriculture is waning
Protect agriculture land and reduce tax burden
Preserving and improving access to water for boating
Water access is getting more difficult with development
Make it easier for people to hike trail heads with signs and maps
Downloadable maps on website
Hike with dogs without bikes where dogs can go off leash
Massachusetts no hunting on Sunday makes places a tourist attraction during hunting season
Need one river guide for put-ins in Massachusetts
Help with swim liability issue with opening/publicizing swimming areas
Find ways to provide technical assistance to link trails that will create networks, also to reduce maintenance needs by getting easements
Need to increase trail system maintenance
Invasive removal takes money
Reclaim/build sidewalks to link areas
Communities should share maintenance equipment
Horse trail riders volunteer trailwork
Need parking for horse trailers!
Find ways to limit ATV's
Keep the no hunting on Sunday
Making biking a priority when doing road projects
Buy land that connects trails
Tax breaks or incentives for hosting bike trails
Connecticut River canoe camping
Off-leash dog tag with money for off leash dog walking
Sticker for parking at state forests with money to forests
Reopen all the state parks

Protect wildlife corridors
Promote silent outdoor recreation – air, water, wildlife that sustains life and sanity
Teach kids to enjoy the silence of nature
Help communities implement dark skies lighting
Support new National Scenic Trail

Appendix E—Executive Summary from Abacus Associates Survey

Executive Summary and Strategic Recommendations

Massachusetts residents, young and old, regularly use and greatly value the outdoor resources the Commonwealth has to offer. While patterns of use vary, citizens of the Bay State, regardless of where they live or their demographic profile, are able to access and take advantage of a wide array of outdoor recreation resources. Residents give positive evaluations for the recreational facilities and opportunities in the state. The obstacles they face to outdoor recreation are far more their own—time and other commitments—than anything to do with a lack of well-maintained, safe facilities or access to those facilities. In the future, many more residents see their outdoor recreation increasing rather than decreasing and the youth of the state are enthusiastic about trying new recreation opportunities.

Participation in Outdoor Recreation

Running, walking, jogging are the top activities reported by adults and youth.

Eight out of ten adults report that they or someone in their household run, jog, or walk multiple times a week for outdoor recreation purposes.

Three other activities (gardening, road biking and hiking) are mentioned by more than 20% of respondents. Swimming in pools (20%) and swimming in fresh and salt-water (18%) closely follow, as do court sports (e.g., basketball) and field sports (e.g., football, soccer, etc.).

There is a great degree of overlap between the activities in which adults and youth report the highest rates of participation.

Swimming, canoeing, and kayaking, and several winter sports are ranked higher in the youth survey than in the adult survey, whereas gardening, golf, and bird and wildlife watching are ranked higher in the adult survey.

Residents are three times more likely to report that their outdoor

recreation activity will increase (38%) in the next five years than decrease (11%).

The groups with the largest expected increase in outdoor recreation are residents of large urban areas and minority residents.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of minority residents expect their outdoor recreation to increase in the next five years, compared to 34% of white, non-Hispanic residents. About half (48%) of residents of large urban areas expect their activity to increase, compared with just over a third of suburban and rural residents (35%) and residents of smaller cities (36%).

Youths enthusiastically take the opportunity to choose activities that they have never tried before or would like to do more often.

Canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing, and camping are high on youths' choices for new or greater opportunities, as are team sports.

Because of their proximity, local outdoor recreation facilities and areas see more frequent rates of use than state facilities, but nearly 90% of residents have visited a Massachusetts state park, beach, forest, or wildlife management area in the past year.

While we see no significant difference in usage of state facilities between families with children under 18 years of age and those with no children under 18, households with children are far more likely to use their local facilities on a frequent basis than those households without children.

Nearly three-quarters of residents (73%) spent at least a day at the Massachusetts coast in the past year, and more than one-third (37%) spent more than a week in total at the coast.

Half of residents say the access and availability of recreation opportunities at Massachusetts coastal areas are either excellent or very good.

Outdoor Recreation Priorities and Needs

Half of residents say that the outdoor recreation facilities and services at both the state level and local level are either excellent or very good, and only 10% or fewer say they are not so good or poor.

Residents were asked to name new or improved outdoor recreation facilities they would like to see developed at the state or local level.

At the state level, adult residents most frequently mentioned beaches and hiking trails.

At the local level, playgrounds top residents' lists, but sports-related facilities are more important to residents at the local level than developing these facilities at the state level.

Youths' desires for new or improved outdoor recreation facilities largely overlap with the preferences of adults.

Fifty-six percent (56%) of Massachusetts residents say that a new National Park, National Forest or National Wildlife Refuge would increase their outdoor recreation in Massachusetts a great deal or somewhat.

In order to increase their outdoor recreation activity, youths identify three main priorities. Most importantly, youths point to a need for more recreation areas close to their homes (56% mentions). Half of youth respondents (53%) also state that more sports equipment would help increase their outdoor activity, while 46% wish for more recreation areas designed just for kids "my age."

Adult residents give a wide range of reasons for why they participate in outdoor recreation, topped by physical fitness, while youths emphasize fun and enjoyment.

Two constraints stand out as the most important reasons that residents do not use recreation facilities more often: not enough time and other commitments getting in the way.

The value of Massachusetts' outdoor recreation facilities goes beyond the simple recreational opportunities they provide. Parks, forests, wildlife areas, and recreation areas help protect the ecosystem, improve the communities in which they are located and help the local economy. The public places the greatest value on: protecting wildlife habitat, improving the quality of life

in local communities, and protecting drinking water

Access, Transportation, Information and Value

For the activities in which residents are most active, the facilities or areas they use are very close to their homes (within five miles), for the great majority of residents.

Residents of large urban communities, as well as those in Western and Central Massachusetts, have to travel slightly further on average to reach their recreation destination.

Minorities and non-minorities have equal access to the areas they use most often.

One in seven Massachusetts households has a member of the household with a disability that restricts his or her ability to use outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Websites, the Internet, and old-fashioned word of mouth are powerful information sources for the public for learning about outdoor recreational facilities, resources, and activities.

The high rates of use of outdoor recreation resources by Massachusetts residents may be a factor in the belief of nearly three-quarters of residents (70%) that the allocation of less than 1% of the Massachusetts state budget for open space and outdoor recreation is too low.

